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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 001424

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STATE FOR AF, AF/E, AF/RSA, AND EB

STATE PASS DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

STATE ALSO PASS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND FAA

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SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI THRILLED ABOUT RESULTS OF JOHANNESBURG

1. (U) Summary: Djibouti's delegation to the Safe Skies for Africa (SSFA) Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, October 25-28 returned with effusive praise of their experience. Djiboutian aviation officials that attended included Technical Advisor to the Minister of Transportation, Mohamed Mahamoud, Chief of Air Traffic Control, Ibrahim Moussa, and Director General of Djibouti International Airport, David Hawker. Embassy Economic Assistant also attended. Djibouti's delegation was especially pleased by the official announcement of Djibouti as a member of the Safe Skies program. Henceforth, the Djiboutian aviation industry is now eligible to receive technical assistance and equipment under the SSFA program. Djibouti must now begin the agreements process with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in order to benefit from the program. End Summary

2. (U) Djibouti's delegation to the October 25-28 Safe Skies for Africa (SSFA) Conference in Johannesburg showed continued interest in all subjects covered by SSFA program speakers during the conference. Government of Djibouti (GOD) officials were pleased with the opportunity to meet with SSFA authorities as well as participants from other countries in order to become familiar with the SSFA program. They were very impressed by the benefits obtained by other countries as a result of the SSFA program and hoped for the same in Djibouti. These advantages include secure airports, professionally trained staff, modern equipment, increased trade, and more routes for national airlines. They also noted the seriousness showed by countries like Kenya, Cape Verde and Uganda in implementing the SSFA program, and look forward to gaining similar experience.

3. (U) SSFA officials told Djibouti's representatives at the Conference that during the course of the program, they would closely cooperate with the Ministry of Transportation, the Civil Aviation and the Airport. The Ministry of Transportation is responsible for implementing and coordinating government policy in road transportation, rail transportation, air transportation, sea transportation and weather forecast. Like most ministries in Djibouti, the Ministry of Transportation lacks adequate financial and human resources. This lack of funding will probably make any commitment of resources from Djibouti difficult.

4. (U) Djibouti's International Airport was contracted to Dubai Port International (DPI) for private management in June 2002. During that time DPI has acquired some equipment and trained several of its staff members. David Hawker, Director General of the Airport expressed the desire to integrate DPI training schedules with SSFA's training agenda. SSFA indicated that it could provide training on the airport existing equipment if the equipment U.S. made. On the request for air navigation equipment made by Ibrahim Moussa, Air Traffic Control Chief, SSFA officials responded that funds are not sufficient to purchase them at this time but second hand equipment could be obtained and shipped at the expense of Djibouti International Airport if agreeable to the airport.

5. (U) During bilateral talks with Djiboutian officials, DOT and DHS both stressed that they will offer technical assistance but it will be GOD responsibility to implement the program. In addition, strong support at ministerial or higher level is crucial for the success of the program. SSFA is committed to help Djibouti meet ICAO standards, promote airport security in the region to protect against terrorism, provide safe and secure passengers and cargo, and establish sound regional navigation and air traffic services, Djibouti's representatives were told. In addition, safe and secure travel is expected to lead to economic benefits.

6. (U) Embassy briefed Almis Haid, Civil Aviation Director who, at the last minute could not attend. Haid said that SSFA program is a blessing for the Civil Aviation Department, which has been completely neglected for many years and does not play its proper supervisory role. The

Civil Aviation Department has a very small staff and an insignificant operational budget. As for the National Airport Security Program, a draft completed by a French Consultant is available but has a lot of shortcomings according to Haid. This draft is currently being reviewed by the ICAO, which visited Djibouti last September to perform a safety audit of Djibouti's sole international airport.

17. (U) The first step Djibouti needs to complete is the signing of a technical assistance agreement with the FAA. Then a SSFA team will visit Djibouti to complete a global initial survey, which will produce an individual roadmap of assistance to Djibouti under the SSFA program. SSFA officials stressed that all their tasks will be in consultation with the US Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti in order to avoid activities that could put the security of the camp at risk. FAA will focus on safety and air navigation while TSA will deal with the security aspects. TSA will need to

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sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the GOD in order to run its activities in Djibouti. TSA handed a draft MOU to the Djiboutian delegation for its review. No comment has yet been provided by the Djiboutian government.

18. (U) Comment: Since the airport is privately run government entity, post expects smooth follow-up and implementation of the SSFA program. Hawker expressed confidence that SSFA and DPI could closely work together to enhance airport security and safety. Post believes that actions from the Ministry of Transportation or the Civil Aviation are likely to be slow, primarily due to shortcomings in institutional organization and coordination. However, we believe the political will and legislative support needed can be mustered. Post hopes that strong desire and initial efforts shown by Djiboutian authorities at the Conference and immediately following will persist throughout the program. End Comment.